

Meeting Summary

Salmon Recovery Funding Board Issues Task Force

May 26, 2004, 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Olympia, WA

Members Present

Steve Tharinger, Chair; Craig Partridge; Steve Leider; Steve Martin; Tim Smith; Dick Wallace; Paul MacRow; Julie Dagnon; Shirley Solomon; Jim Fox.

Also present: Will Hall (SRFB Review Panel member), Kristi Lynette and Brian Walsh (WDFW staff), Rollie Geppert (SRFB staff), and Doug Osterman (LEAG Vice Chair).

The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss options for how the SRFB might approach allocating funds to lead entity project lists at the Board's December 2-3, 2004 meeting and clarify what is being asked of the Review Panel and IAC staff prior to this meeting.

Spring meetings between lead entities and the Review Panel. Responding to a question raised by one of the ITF members, the ITF reaffirmed that the purpose of these meetings was to:

- provide an opportunity for Review Panel members to meet lead entity representatives in an informal setting
- familiarize the Review Panel with the lead entity area and strategy
- give Panel members the opportunity to ask questions and clarify points that were confusing to them
- provide lead entities with some initial observations about the strategies
- give Panel members the chance to see all of the strategies and gain a state-wide perspective before they are asked to evaluate them

The purpose of the meetings was not to evaluate strategies or to make recommendations for them to be changed for the Fifth Round.

A summary of the Review Panel's comments was sent to lead entities and posted on the SRFB web site.

Review Panel report to the SRFB. The ITF concluded that the report should include, for each lead entity:

- The Panel's ratings for the specificity and focus of the lead entity strategy and the fit of project list to the strategy;
- Narratives explaining each rating, and an overall narrative regarding the focus and specificity of the strategy and the fit of the project list to the strategy; and
- Projects that Technical Advisors find are not technically sound (this applies to projects that could be funded in the first as well as the second increment of funding)

The report should not include observations that are unrelated to the specificity and focus of the strategy and fit of the project list to the strategy. The report should not include funding recommendations.

Staff report to the SRFB. The ITF concluded that this report should consist of a compilation and clear presentation of the results of the Review Panel's evaluation. The report may also include staff's observations of any trends or patterns in the Review Panel's ratings. The staff report should not include funding recommendations.

Other information the Board could consider in making allocation decisions.

The ITF concluded that the information listed below should be sufficient for the Board to make its final funding decisions in December.

- Strategy summaries provided by each lead entity
- Each lead entity's answers to the seven questions regarding strategy specificity and fit of the project list to the strategy
- One-page summaries of each project (this is the standard project summary report from PRISM, which includes the 1500-character project description provided by the applicant)
- Review Panel report
- Staff report
- Public comments regarding the Review Panel and staff reports, including testimony at the December 2-3, 2004, SRFB meeting.

The ITF reaffirmed that, other than considering the observations from the technical advisors regarding technically unsound projects, the Board should not consider the quality of individual projects. Projects not flagged by the technical advisors should be assumed to be technically sound. Deciding which projects have the greatest benefits to the salmon has been delegated to the lead entities.

Review Panel feedback to lead entities. The ITF recommends that the Panel provide each lead entity with general observations and suggestions regarding the overall quality of the lead entity's strategy and evaluation process, but not until

after the funding decisions in December since the Board agreed that in the Fifth Round the overall quality of the lead entity strategy beyond “focus and specificity” would not be considered. This will give lead entities the opportunity to make changes, if desired, for the Sixth Grant Round.

SRFB allocation of funds to lead entity lists. After the spring meetings with lead entities, Review Panel members noted the possibility that many lead entities might score high on strategy specificity and focus and may have an excellent list of projects. If this is the case, the information being considered by the SRFB for the December funding decisions may not be adequate for the Board to differentiate between lead entity lists. The staff report will assist the Board in recognizing distinctions between lists if the distinctions are meaningful. However, if there is no significant distinction between two or more lead entities, the ITF recommends that each of these lists of projects be allocated the same amount of funding. Differences between lead entities due to the number of salmonid river-miles and listed species will already have been accounted for in the first increment of funding. These criteria do not need to be applied again for the second increment of funding.

The ITF also noted that after funds are allocated to each of the 26 lead entity lists of projects, it is likely that some projects just above the funding line will be partially funded. At this time, the ITF does not recommend that adjustments be made to fully fund partially-funded projects. ITF suggested that the sponsor seek additional funding from other sources or break the project into phases.

Policy on “returned funds.” It is possible that a funded project cannot be implemented or is implemented under budget. Do those “returned funds” stay with that lead entity’s list of projects, being applied to the next unfunded (or partially funded) project on the list? The ITF recommends that the SRFB develop a policy on this issue prior to the December 2-3 meeting so that sponsors of partially-funded projects and projects just below the funding line know whether to anticipate the possibility of additional funding.